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ELBERT PEETS is well known for his writings in the field of city planning. He is a member of the Washington Commission of Fine Arts. With this brief essay he relates the plan of Washington to its historical context.

THE GENEALOGY OF THE PLAN OF WASHINGTON

Not genealogy, perhaps, so much as relationships, for this is a background study of the values and images a French artist of the time would bring to his work—a perspective sketch of the planning sector of the culture to which L'Enfant belonged. Before examining root-motifs, however, we should understand the aesthetic rationale of the fashion L'Enfant worked in, the radial style of planning.

Beautiful cities usually have two aspects, a prevailing pattern or texture and a unifying organization. The medieval towns had a quaint texture of accidents harmonized by a traditional good taste; they were organized by their topography, by their walls and gates, by the dominance of a plaza or two and a few high buildings. They were beautiful; they were small. The radial style, on the other hand—or radial-plus-gridiron—can control large areas and many monumental buildings. By the use of strong architectural axes and (as L'Enfant called them) "reciprocities of sight," it makes extent of area perceptible, dramatic, moving. Unlike irregular plans and purely rectangular ones, it employs the surveying technique of triangulation: one feels the existence of streets that are not optically perceived. The sensed unity of a great city—that was the ultimate goal of the Renaissance builders. And we are noting the materials they had at hand.

First the good old gridiron, one of man's greatest inventions, now vulgarized to us by excessive familiarity. The oldtime planners controlled its limits and design, relating it to the site, enriching it with plazas. In view of Williamsburg, Savannah, and many European towns, it was natural for L'Enfant to make plastic use of his underlying grid.

Nonrectangular straight lines appear at several points in the evolution of land planning. Their use in French gardening is particularly relevant to this study. In the 1600's the French, stimulated by the Italians, enlarged their neat *parterres* and spread into the hunting forests that lay so often near the *chateaux*. They absorbed them physically, transformed them aesthetically.

One must know about these forests and about the sport of hunting the stag with horses and hounds. The hunt began at dawn, when the deer returned to their hiding-thickets from their night of grazing in the clearings. There might be a hundred people—grooms, keepers, trumpeteers, lords, ladies, cooks and surgeons. Often the kill and its ceremonies did not take place until evening. For the return of the cavalcade, and for detecting poachers, locating the stag and servicing the hunt, long straight avenues were cut and were brought together, when the ground favored it, into stars. There was no symmetry in this; it was not until the Baroque conception of space caught up with the forest avenues that their aesthetic power was used in design.

There were urban precedents, also, for the use of diagonal lines; in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries architects went to Rome to study street and plaza planning. Particularly renowned was the replanning of the Rione Campo Marzio, about 1520, by Sangallo and Rafael. Two straight streets already spread into the city from the Porta del Popolo; they cut a new radial street to the left of the Corso and thereby formed the first—and most beautiful—*patte d'oie*. (Geese, you know, have three toes.) Toward the close of the same century Fontana planned a system of long straight streets through the then uninhabited higher part of Rome, around S. M. Maggiore. His work was admired by travellers but it was the Campo Marzio and Aldobrandini *pattes d'oie* that helped the French planners to tame the forest avenue and to produce the town and park of Versailles.

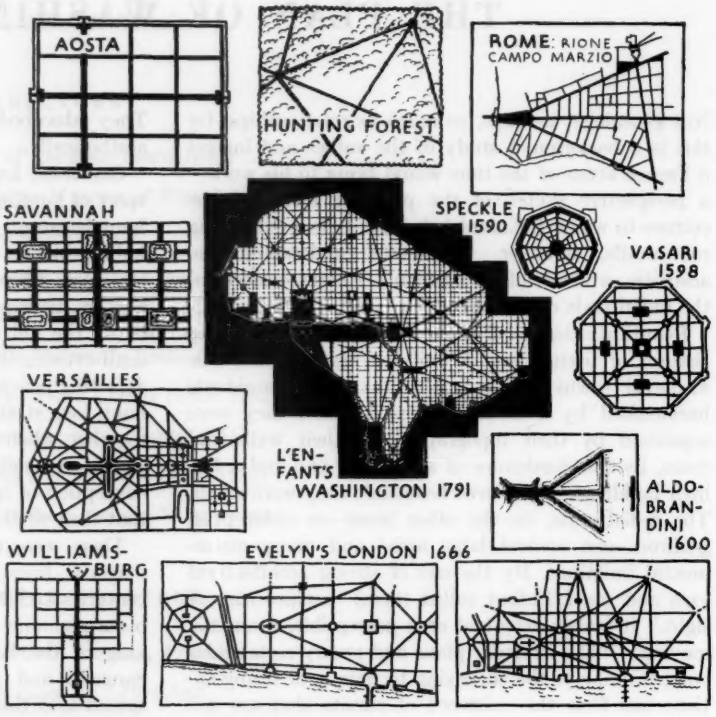
Among the illustrations herewith are samples of the theoretical town plans that ornamented old books on fortifications. These have had very little influence on city planning, though Wren, for his London proposal, got some hints from Speckle. L'Enfant made no evident use of them—despite the frequent assertion

that Washington, the most vulnerable city ever built, was designed for military defense.

As the last item in our inventory, the design of beautiful inclosed plazas was a prime enthusiasm during the high period of formal town planning. The suite of plazas at Nancy is an outstanding example. By L'Enfant's time, however, the cult of the architectural plaza was dying out, and the grand scale of his streets was little suited to such refinements.

These, in thumbnail sketches, are the planning concepts available to L'Enfant. His plan, made with no experience or specific training, is the most fully developed example of the style he chose to use and is surely one of the world's most prodigious accomplishments by one man in one year. That he could do it, I think, is due to his full saturation with the visual-creative thought of his time. Yes, and to the fact that as a boy he played in the gardens of Versailles.

WASHINGTON, D. C.



Types of planning that formed the background for the Washington plan. Aosta, based on Roman legionary camp, illustrates ancient use of gridiron. The Speckle and Vasari plans are from books on fortifications. John Evelyn's proposed plans for rebuilding London, 1666, were published by London Society of Antiquaries, 1789

Hunting party in forest, with converging avenues, from a French tapestry, 1734-35

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This article is part of a larger study of Latrobe he is making for his Ph.D. at Princeton. An account of an original structure proceeds by means of the intellectual exchange between Jefferson and the architect.

LATROBE'S CEILING FOR THE HALL OF REPRESENTATIVES

In March 1803 an act passed by Congress appropriated funds for resuming construction of the United States Capitol building.[1] The earlier disinclination of Congress to make an appropriation was regarded by President Jefferson as a great error, for he believed in the peculiar ability of a great architectural monument to unify a government and people by means of its symbolic properties. Jefferson envisioned the Capitol, with its central domical shape, as tangible evidence of American social and political unity. The act of 1803 gave the President complete control over the design of the Capitol and over the expenditure of money, without specifying the exact procedure he should follow.

Jefferson decided to hire an architect, called as in England a Surveyor of Public Buildings, who could finish the Capitol in a manner both elegant and durable. The previous year Jefferson had employed the only professionally trained architect in America, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, to investigate the feasibility of constructing naval docks and an arsenal at Washington. Latrobe's thorough report and set of masterful drawings for this project pleased the President immensely, and virtually assured Latrobe's selection in March of 1803 as the first Surveyor.[2] Besides recognizing Latrobe's obvious competence as an architect, Jefferson was, I believe, attracted by his broad education which included knowledge of Greek, Latin and several modern languages, as well as proficiency in engineering and architecture. Conversely, Latrobe's admiration for Jefferson had always been profound. As a child in England Latrobe was told by his parents of Jefferson's fame and prowess;[3] and as an adult he was not disappointed by familiar acquaintance. He declares this in a letter of 1805 when he writes of Jefferson:

> He is certainly one of the best hearted men that ever came out of the hand of Nature and has one of the best heads also. But he thinks, writes, and acts differently from others; and who ever does that must submit to abuse, let the new road he travels be ever so much shorter, cleaner, and pleasanter. As a man, I never knew his superior in candor, kindness, and universal information;—as a political character he has not his equal anywhere in patriotism, right intentions, and uniform perserverance in the system he has conceived to be the most beneficial for his country.—Nothing in fact exists, in his whole character, on which to fasten ridicule and censure but his manner, and a few oddities of appearance and of conduct which are perfectly innocent and probably very right.[4]

By 1803 only the north wing of the Capitol had been completed from the plans of William Thornton. Thornton's original plan for the south wing called for a large oval room for the legislators. Latrobe, who professed a dislike for Rococo forms, and in fact found fault with Thornton's entire plan, immediately tried to substitute a new design for the south wing. Instead of the elliptical shape, he wanted to introduce a semicircular plan conforming to the best solutions offered by the infallible classic architects. However, Jefferson, while asserting a propensity for classical architecture, still preferred to keep the ovoid form, reminiscent of the late eighteenth century work he learned to appreciate while residing in Paris as our ambassador. No drawing for the principal story of this first rejected project of Latrobe's exists, but it may be reconstructed, as in this plan (Fig. 1), from written descriptions, and sketches in his letters.[5] Latrobe's next attempt to circumvent the scheme of his predecessor Thornton, and the taste of the President, was to concoct a mixture of ellipse and semicircle; namely, a parallelogram abutted by two semicircles. This second plan, sent to Jefferson in March 1804,[6] was accepted as a suitable

Special thanks are due to the Pennsylvania State College Council on Research which provided me with funds for microfilm; to Lyman H. Butterfield for directing me to the Latrobe-Lenthall correspondence; and to Howard Rice for locating the engraving of the Halle aux Blés.

compromise, and fortunately it still exists (Fig. 2).

As far as I can determine, Thornton had never made drawings of a permanent roof for his elliptical room, nor had he selected an adequate method for lighting the interior. With no established scheme to impede their originality, both Jefferson and Latrobe devised their own ways of solving the problem. However, Jefferson insisted, with presidential prerogative, that the ribbed dome of the famous Halle aux Blés in Paris be imitated. The ingenuity of its designers, Legrand and Molinos, produced an enclosure of magnificent effect; and as Jefferson said from personal observation, "it was the most superb thing on earth!"[7] An engraving cut while Jefferson was in Paris displays the brilliance of this achievement (Fig. 3).[8] Although Latrobe made several drawings for the Hall of Representatives incorporating this idea in March of 1804 (Fig. 6), none satisfied him. He insisted that his habits of taste as well as his concern with practical efficiency prevented him from regarding the Halle aux Blés as a suitable model. He argued that skylights like those of the French building would be quite flat at the crown of the dome, and during rainy weather, or from melting snow, would be very likely to leak through some of the 2,400 joints in the windows. As he points out, "A single leaky joint, dropping upon the head or desk of a member will disturb the whole house."[9] Furthermore, by making some astronomical calculations Latrobe demonstrated that the large number of ceiling lights would create very disturbing optical effects during most of the legislative session. His calculations are diagramatically displayed on his section drawing of the Hall (Fig. 6). He then invented, as though to counter his own objections, a system of pulleys, which, when properly manipulated, would open or close a series of blinds over the skylights. On mentioning this clever invention to the President, he was surprised and somewhat chagrined to learn that Jefferson had already installed a very similar contrivance of his own at Monticello.

Latrobe further objected to skylights because they would produce condensation of water in the winter. If this should occur on the inside of the 3,750 square feet of glass, inevitably a certain number of water droplets would find their way to the floor below. He had no cure for this last difficulty.

Latrobe's pessimism about using skylights like the Halle aux Blés, instead of a cupola with vertical panes of glass, made little impression upon Jefferson. He replied to Latrobe's entreaties as follows:

> I cannot express to you the regret I feel on the subject of renouncing the Halle au bled lights of the Capitol dome. That single circumstance was to constitute the distinguishing merit of the room, & would solely have made it the handsomest room in the world, without a single exception. take that away, it becomes a common thing exceeded by many, & even by some corporation buildings. The only objection having any weight with me is the danger of leaking, & I had hoped that art had resources for that where the expence would not have been an obstacle. but as you state that it cannot be secured against leaking & that is more than a countervail for any degree of beauty sacrificed to it, I cannot take on myself to say that leakage can be prevented in opposition to the opinion of practical men. I leave therefore the decision on the abandonment of the idea entirely to yourself, & will acquiesce in that.[10]

This reply left only one avenue open for Latrobe; his professional ability had been challenged, he was obliged to use the skylights.

The ingenious combination of wooden ribs with glass interstices used by Legrand and Molinos for the Halle aux Blés was made possible by a clever combination of pre-fabricated wooden boards and pegs, a system initiated by the French architect, Philibert Delorme, and described in his book on architecture.[11] The diagrams in the volume adequately explain this light, flexible construction (Figs. 4 and 5). By this method a large area could be easily and inexpensively vaulted, and yet retain the airy, cobweb-like quality of late Gothic stonework. By glazing the rifts between the ribs ample diffused light could enter, producing the effect of a radiating sunburst.

Within a week after having been reproached by Jefferson for yielding to the possible exigencies of weather so easily, Latrobe had contrived a new way of lighting the Hall of Representatives; and in a letter written to Jefferson on September 13th he admits "an embryo idea" has cropped up in his mind, but says that he will not divulge it immediately.[12] Late in November Latrobe's idea had matured. He made careful drawings explaining it, and sent them to John Lenthall, the Clerk of the Works at the Capitol. The major drawing, dated the 28th of November, is still preserved in the Library of Congress, and has never before been published (Fig. 7). The masterful delineation is typical of Latrobe's work in which he unerringly creates a work of art out of a mere architectural drawing. This drawing shows us that his new idea was to substitute five roughly rectangular panel lights for each long ribbed skylight. By using this method the number of joints would be greatly reduced, and each pane of glass could be framed in wood on three sides with the fourth left free for drainage as indicated in the drawing. Jefferson was entirely satisfied with the latest proposal because, as he said, " . . . it would be as beautiful [as the Halle aux Blés] & a more mild mode of lighting, because it would be an original &

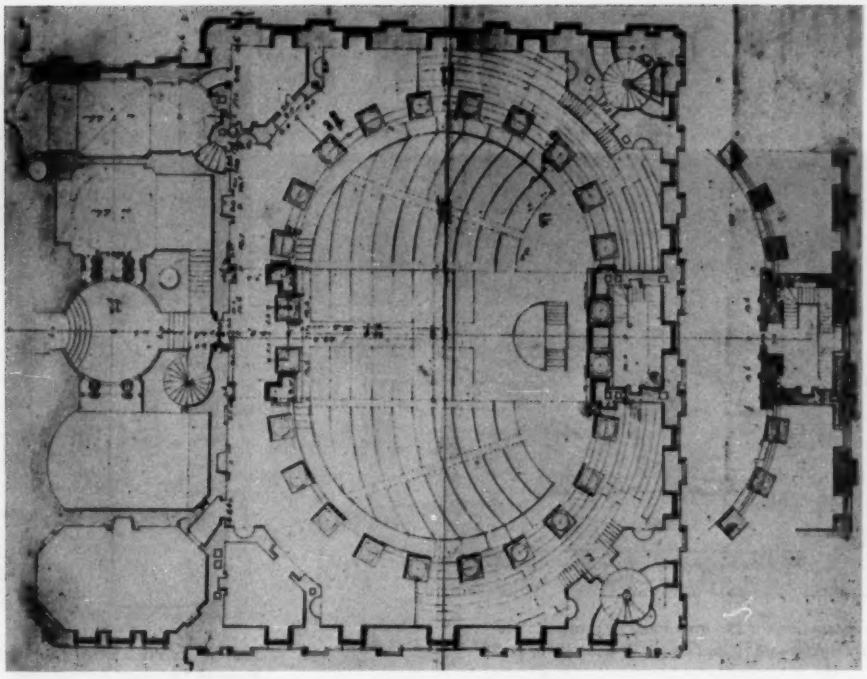


FIG. 2 Latrobe's plan for the principal floor of the Hall of Representatives. March 1804. From G. Brown, *History of the United States Capitol*, Washington, 1900, I, pl. 40.

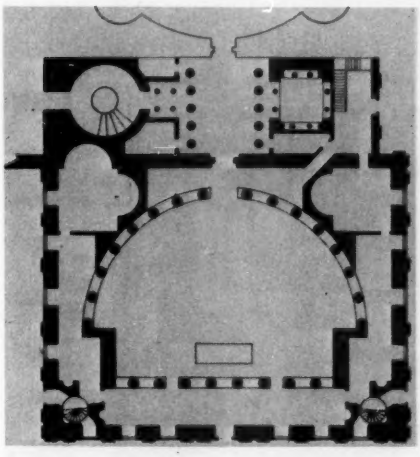


FIG. 1 Latrobe's plan for the principal floor of the Hall of Representatives. A tentative reconstruction.

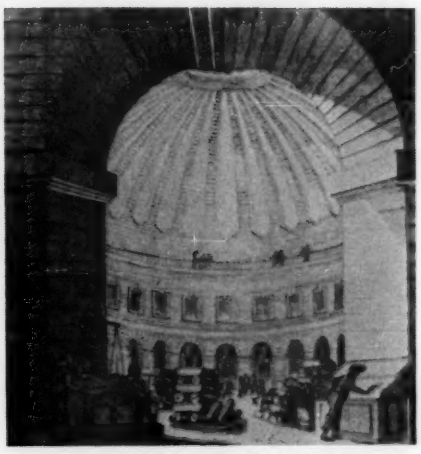


FIG. 3 Halle aux Blés, Paris. From Thiéry, *Almanach du voyageur à Paris*, Paris, 1785-86, I, pl. 6.

unique, & I knew that all experience had proved that a skylight of a single pane, bedded in wood, was easily secured from leaking."[13]

By the summer of 1806 the south wing construction had advanced to the point where the carpenters could prepare the Delorme ribs for the barrel arch and dome of the Hall of Representatives. Undaunted by Jefferson's flat rejection of a cupola with lantern lights for the dome, Latrobe wrote to Jefferson in August saying that a cupola had been prepared for the center in case the glass for the skylights did not arrive from Germany in time.[14] In October Jefferson learned from the Clerk of the Works at the Capitol that the carpentry work for the skylights had not been touched,

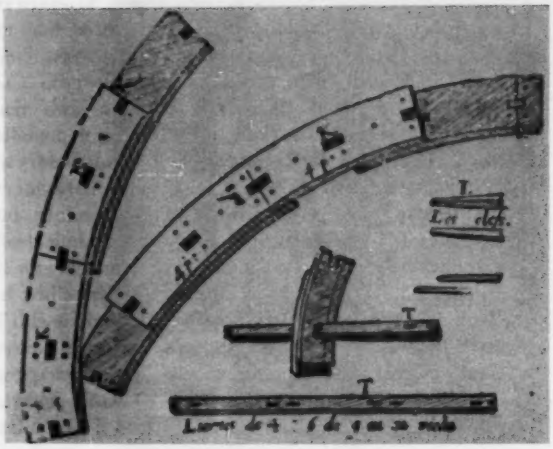


FIG. 4 Rib construction for Delorme roof. From P. Delorme, *Architecture de P. de l'Orme*, Rouen, 1648, p. 285.

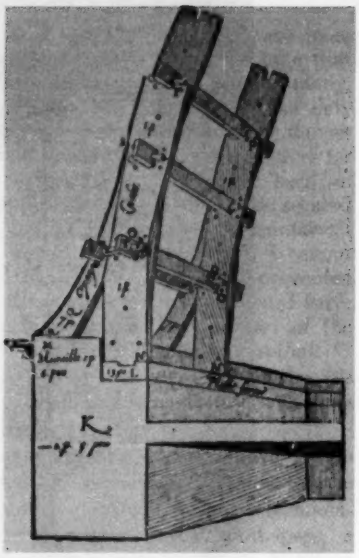


FIG. 5 Erection of ribs for Delorme roof. From P. Delorme, *Architecture* . . . , p. 291.

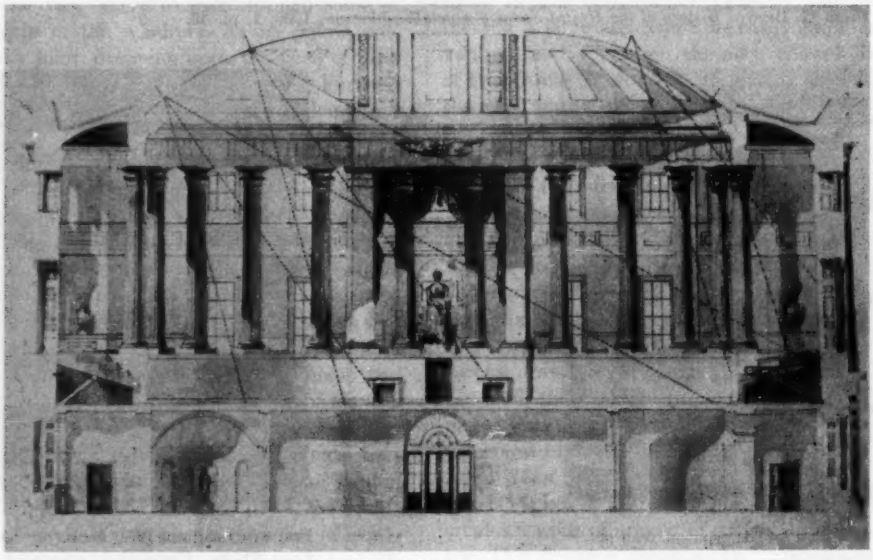


FIG. 6 Hall of Representatives, section drawing by Latrobe. March 1804. From G. Brown, *History of the United States Capitol*, Washington, 1900, I, pl. 42.

while the favored cupola was entirely finished and ready to install.[15] This irksome news brought forth a sharp note from Jefferson directing the skylight frames to be prepared with all haste. In response Latrobe could only reiterate his dissatisfaction with any kind of ceiling lights because of the inevitable drip from interior condensation. He stated that the neglect in preparing the frames was owing to his belief that the glass would not arrive in time, and to the great expense which would be incurred in making them.[16] Jefferson still gave no quarter and would only consent to use a roof with a central cupola, if after trial the paneled skylights proved impractical.[17]

The following spring the carpenters and plasterers

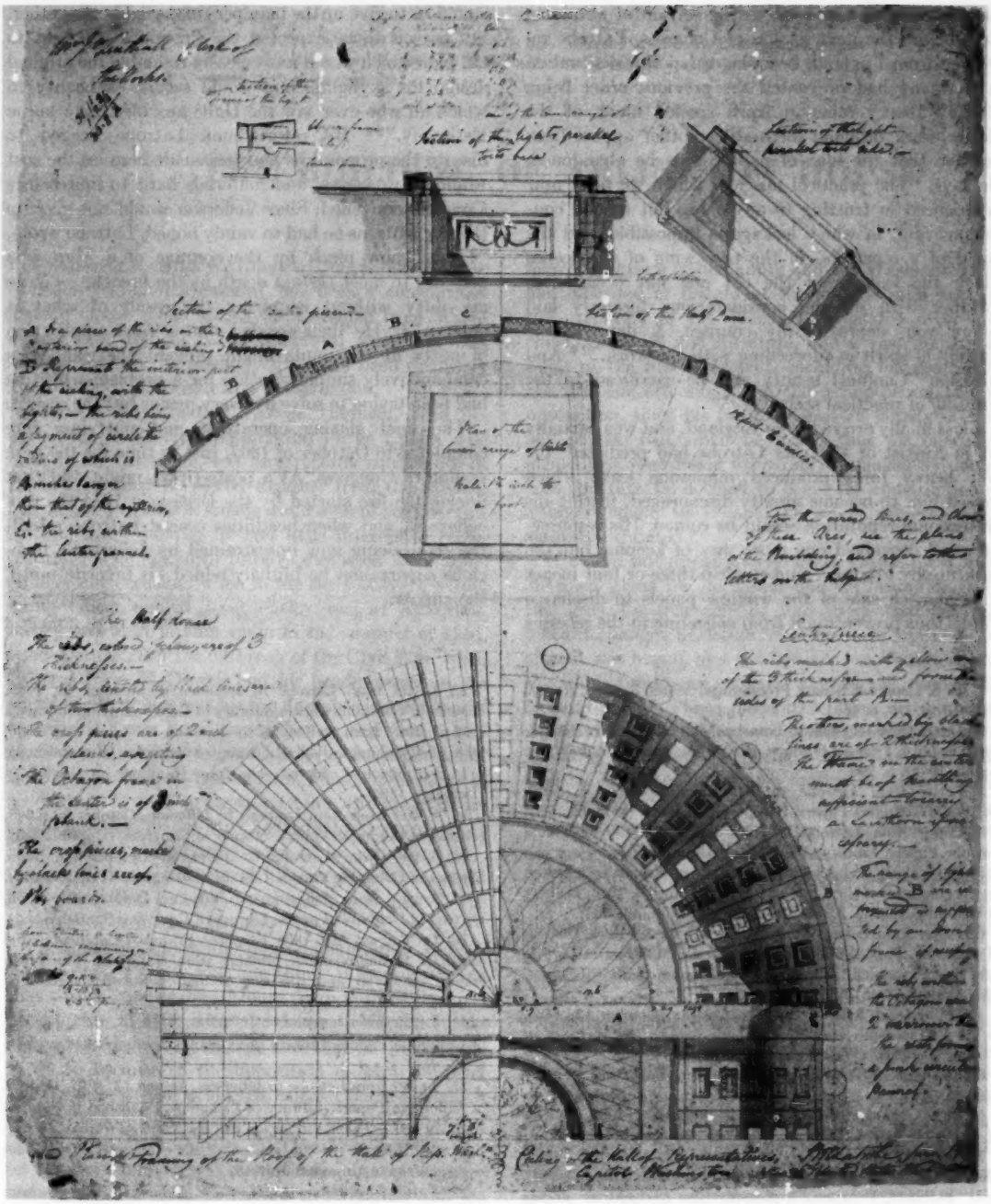


FIG. 7 Framing of the roof of the Hall of Representatives, drawing by Latrobe. November 28, 1805.

were hard at work trying to finish the interior of the Hall even though the all-important glass ordered from Germany had not arrived. To be certain of obtaining glass before the next session of Congress, Latrobe reordered from England, believing the political situation in Germany had prevented the previous order being filled.[18] Heavy rains in April spoiled much of the plaster work bringing forth still another appeal from Latrobe that the idea of panel lights be abandoned. He says, "The practical mischief which we have now experienced in trusting to any thing but a solid continuous roof, in which leakage is impossible, and the dread of a repetition in the new wing of the scenes which the leakage of the old one has occasioned, together with all the considerations formerly laid before you, depresses my courage, & deprives me entirely of spirit in proceeding with the work."[19] And he asks, "Can[not] beauty still be sacrificed to the *certainty* of practical security?"[20]

Glass finally arrived from England, and was partially set in August of 1807. As Latrobe had predicted, the first heavy rains produced numerous leaks which caused him to become greatly discouraged, fearing his professional reputation would be ruined. His resourceful mind conceived one more way of keeping out the moisture by leaving a sunken strip three or four inches wide at each side of the window panels to discharge water, thus preventing it from collecting in the recesses of the panels.[21] Latrobe's letter to Jefferson containing this latest modification implied that the best solution would be to give up the trumpery of skylights altogether, but as was to be expected the President still held to the plan which would most closely resemble the original design for skylights, and would secure "a beauty to which all who ever saw the Halle aux blés have borne testimony."[22] By return mail Latrobe begged to discard the proposal he had just made because the cost would be excessive, and materials hard to find before Congress convened. Since Jefferson would not give up the skylights, as he had so vainly hoped, Latrobe wrote, "I must now pluck up the courage of a Man who marches to meet certain death at the breach, — & do my duty without enquiring the result of what it enjoins."[23] He then decided that a fresh application of putty at the joints might prevent the leakage, a comparatively simple solution for a problem which he had been trying to solve by every means but the easiest.

The final glazing operations and puttying were completed in October of 1807, just in time for the next session of Congress. As a postscript I might add that during the fire started by the British in 1814 the roof collapsed, and when hostilities ceased Latrobe rebuilt the roof. Being now unrestrained by Jefferson's tenacious supervision he blithely added his favorite motif, the cupola.

PENN STATE COLLEGE

1. U. S. Congress, Senate Proceedings, March 3, 1803, *Annals of Congress, 7-2*, p. 1601.

2. Letter from Jefferson to Latrobe, March 6, 1803, in Saul K. Padover (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson and the National Capital* (Washington, 1946), p. 296.

3. Letter from Latrobe to Jefferson, December 4, 1802, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

4. Letter from Latrobe to John Lenthall, May 11, 1805, Latrobe Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

5. Particularly useful is Latrobe's first report made to Jefferson on the condition of the Capitol, submitted April 4, 1803, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

6. Letter from Latrobe to Jefferson, March 29, 1804, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. Published in part in Saul K. Padover (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson and the National Capital* (Washington, 1946), pp. 343-344.

7. Letter from Jefferson to Mrs. Cosway, October 12, 1786, in A. A. Lipscomb and A. E. Bergh (eds.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington, 1903-04), V, p. 433.

8. Luc Vincent Thiéry, *Almanach du voyageur à Paris* (Paris, 1785-86), I, pl. 6.

9. Letter from Latrobe to Jefferson, August 31, 1805, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

10. Letter from Jefferson to Latrobe, September 8, 1805, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

11. Philibert Delorme, *Architecture de Philibert de l'Orme* (Rouen, 1648), pp. 285 and 291. Jefferson acquired a copy of Delorme's book (Paris, 1576) while in Paris. He retained it until 1815 when it was sold to Congress for their new library.

12. Letter from Latrobe to Jefferson, September 13, 1805, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

13. Letter from Jefferson to Latrobe, October 31, 1806, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

14. Latrobe had ordered glass from Hamburg on the 6th of December 1805.

15. Letter from John Lenthall to Jefferson, October 20, 1806, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

16. Letter from Latrobe to Jefferson, October 29, 1806, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

17. Letter from Jefferson to Latrobe, October 31, 1806, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

18. On August 6th, 1806 Emperor Francis II abdicated the crown of Germany under pressure from Napoleon. The whole empire dissolved and did not become politically stable for many years.

19. Letter from Latrobe to Jefferson, April 14, 1807, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

20. *Ibid.*

21. Letter from Latrobe to Jefferson, August 13, 1807, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. Published in Saul K. Padover (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson and the National Capital* (Washington, 1946), pp. 394-396, except for the exact part of the letter which refers to this modification.

22. Letter from Jefferson to Latrobe, August 18, 1807, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

23. Letter from Latrobe to Jefferson, August 21, 1807, District of Columbia Papers, Library of Congress. (Unpublished).

MURRAY NELLIGAN is the National Park Service Historian for the Lee Mansion in Arlington, Virginia. His investigations clarify the successive stages of the construction of the mansion.

THE BUILDING OF ARLINGTON HOUSE

For well over a century Arlington House, now the Lee Mansion National Memorial, has been a conspicuous feature of the scene across the Potomac from Washington. Yet for all its architectural excellence and historic interest, surprisingly little has been definitely known about its origin and construction.

Unfortunately, neither George Hadfield, who designed it, nor George Washington Parke Custis, who built it for his home, left any records concerning it. Its history must be pieced together from the existing fragmentary evidence. Custis was a man of considerable culture, but evidently he had little interest in architecture, for he is known to have discussed the subject on only one occasion, when in the early 1820's a young Army officer named John Farley was at Arlington. Farley was at Arlington again in the summer of 1861, a few months after the outbreak of the Civil War, when General Irvin McDowell had his headquarters in the mansion. With him was his son Joseph, aide to General Mansfield. Years later, young Farley had this to say of their visit: "My father called me to a particular spot on the lawn in front of the house, remarking as he did so: 'I want to explain to you the architecture of this building, just as Mr. Custis did forty years ago.' " Whereupon, young Farley went on to something else, thus depriving architectural historians of what might have been the best, if third-hand, account of the building of Arlington House.[1]

Fortunately, there are more enlightening sources than Joseph Farley. For one thing, it is now known that Custis tried to buy Mount Vernon from Bushrod Washington in 1802, after the death of Martha Washington, Custis' grandmother, and that he was unable to do so because of the opposition of Mrs. Bushrod Washington to the projected sale.[2] Custis thereupon moved to Arlington, which he had inherited from his father, John Parke Custis, Martha Washington's son by her first marriage. Young Custis was twenty-one and unmarried when he moved to Arlington and set up bachelor quarters in the four-room cottage built by a former owner near the river. In it he stored the many heirlooms of his family and the Washingtons he had inherited or bought at the various sales held by the executors of the Washington estate: silver and china, paintings and furniture, and a vast number of relics of the first President, including his death-bed. His first concern was to get the Arlington estate into production, since his fortune consisted largely of land and slaves. But when he found that his cherished mementoes were being irreparably damaged by dampness and rats, he decided to begin the construction of a house where they could be safely preserved and suitably exhibited.[3]

If he did not already have them, Custis must have obtained plans for his house and its outbuildings at this time, for there are no indications that any significant changes in design were made in the mansion after it was begun, and the two servants' quarters and the stable (no longer existing) were in the same architectural style.[4] These plans have been attributed at one time or another to numerous architects and builders, including Thomas Jefferson, tavern-keeper John Gadsby, a nameless Turkish ambassador, and Custis himself, though neither in his letters nor in the many accounts written about him by his contemporaries, are such plans mentioned.

In recent years the house has been correctly attributed to George Hadfield, the gifted young English architect who stayed on in Washington after losing his job supervising the construction of the Capitol. Hadfield died in 1826 and his obituary lists "Mr. Custis's house" as one of his creations.[5] William P. Elliot, architect and surveyor, who was for five years a student of Hadfield and a great admirer of what he termed Hadfield's "beautiful proportions" and "chaste architecture," says the same thing in a letter to the editor of a local newspaper seven years later.[6] Elliot published the first known picture of the house in the 1826 edition of his *Washington Guide*.[7] William Dunlap, artist, dramatist and diarist, likewise attributes "the plan of . . . Custis's Mansion" to Hadfield in a book published eight years after the latter's death.[8] These

men were in a position to know, and their attribution must be accepted in the absence of better evidence to the contrary.

Influenced by the contemporary interest in classical architecture, Custis wanted his house in that style. Accordingly, his architect planned one with an impressive Greek Doric portico in front of the two-story main section, balanced by one-story extended wings, the whole composition having proportions strong enough to make the building show to best advantage when seen from across the river. Since ornamentation would be useless at such a distance, Hadfield relied almost entirely on good proportions to give beauty to his creation. Inside, the rooms would be large and have high ceilings, and their walls would be severely plain except for a molding near the ceiling. Having them open into one another would give an illusion of great space, while semi-circular arches and beautifully proportioned windows would relieve any impression of austerity.

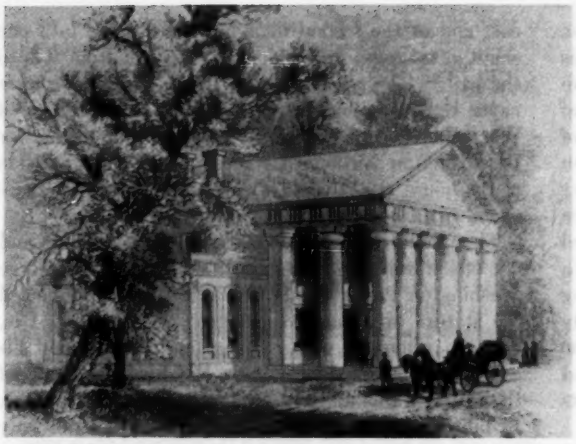
In building his house, Custis followed the common method of constructing the wings first, leaving the center section and portico to be put up later. As originally built, the entire north wing was one large banquet room with a kitchen and a laundry in the basement below, as is shown by the distinct difference found between the finish of the wood trim on the perimeter and that on the present partition walls. Furthermore, the old chimney breast, still to be seen in the middle of the west wall, is in precisely the same location as the present one in the south wing. It is likely, too, that the beautiful wooden mantel, now in one of the small inside rooms, was originally intended for this fireplace, for it is disproportionately large for its present situation. The location of the pantry and the indoor kitchen in this wing and the outdoor one just west of it, supports this belief.[9]

The corresponding wing to the south was outwardly identical in appearance, but was divided inside into a large parlor for entertaining and a smaller room for use as an office and study.[10] Each wing was a complete building in itself, indicating that Custis anticipated some delay in building the main part of the house.[11] Even at this stage "Arlington House" attracted favorable attention; one young lady visiting there in 1804 reported that "The House will be a very handsome building when compleated."[12] Even more enthusiastic was the comment of a traveller a few years later: "This seat is on a superb mount, and his buildings are begun in a stile of superior taste and elegance."[13]

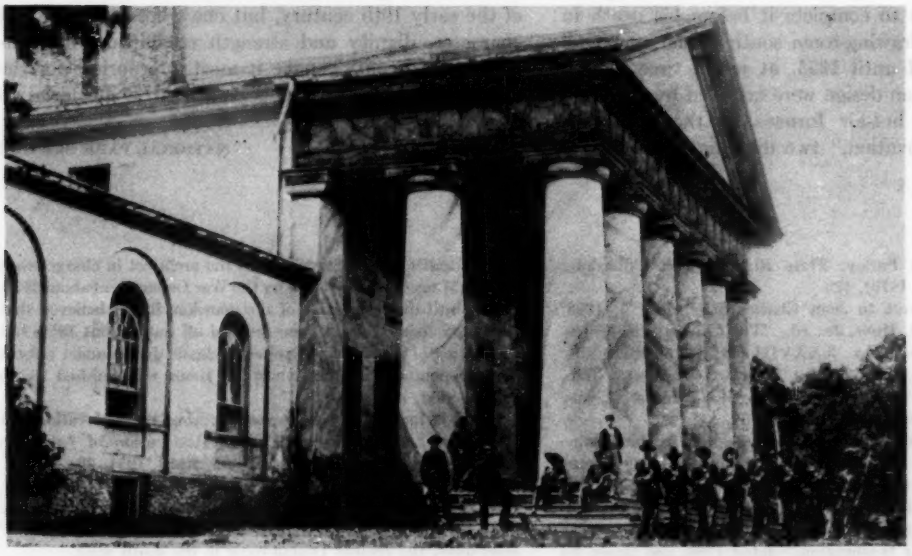
There is some evidence that both wings were built by the summer of 1804 when Custis married Mary Lee Fitzhugh, of "Chatham," near Fredericksburg.[14] To provide living quarters, the north wing was partitioned into three small rooms, the present arrangement. No doubt financial reasons account for the delay in building the center section and portico until after the end of the War of 1812. Years later, Mrs. Lee wrote that she could just barely remember when the main section was built; while one of her childhood playmates, born in 1812, could recall chasing chickens about its foundations when a little girl.[15] Apparently, the main section of the house was built in 1817, for in December of that year a waterproof stucco plaster devised by David Meade Randolph, whose wife, Mary, lies buried just below the house, was applied to its northwest corner.[16] It may be inferred, too, that the portico was built about this time, else the term, "Custis' Folly," applied to the house by a traveller from the North early the next year, would hardly have been justified.[17] Miscellaneous bills for plastering and the services of a builder, together with a letter by Custis putting off the payment of an overdue bill because of "the heavy expense of my building," further support this belief.[18] Not until 1824, when General Lafayette visited Arlington, is the portico specifically mentioned.[19]

The building was most solidly constructed. All the walls and most of the foundations were of brick, as were the portico columns, but there is no evidence that these were made of clay dug on the estate, as is the tradition, though this was a common practice about Washington at the time.[20] All the brickwork exposed to the weather was covered by a hard stucco plaster, scored to imitate cut stone, as was the pediment, a balustrade on top of the wings and some of the interior walls. Slight horizontal grooves around the portico columns indicated drum lines.[21] Originally the cement on the columns seems to have been tinted to look like marble, but later was painted white, providing more contrast to the warm buff or ochre color of the rest of the exterior. Joists, studs and rafters were of hewn timber, neatly mortised together or pinned with wooden pegs, the main roof being supported by great trusses spanning the entire width of the center section, and every piece of timber being numbered, however small. Doors, cornices, floors and woodwork were of native pine.[22]

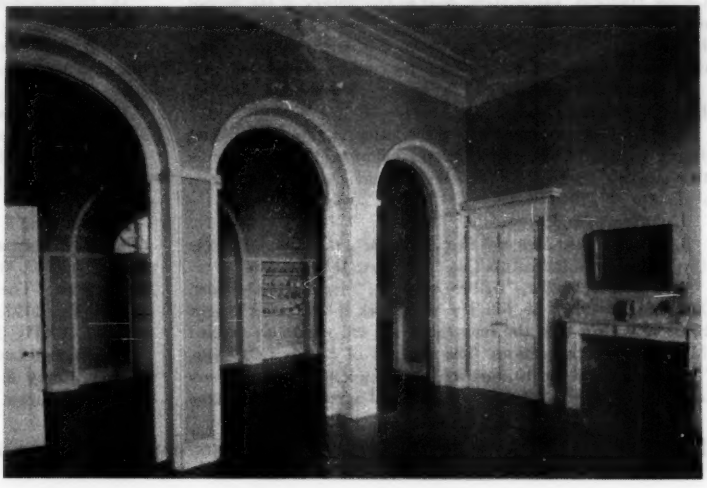
For all its imposing appearance when seen at a distance, the real size of the mansion is not apparent until seen close at hand, for magnolias now completely hide the one-story wings, each 40 feet long and 25 feet wide. All that is presently seen is the portico and two-storied center section of the building, the latter being 60 feet wide and 40 feet deep. Although the wings, unobscured, would be quite pleasing because of their tall recessed windows, the magnificent Doric portico is the salient architectural feature. This extends out 25 feet from the house and has eight columns, each



Arlington House in 1853,
a sketch by Benson J. Lossing.



The portico and south wing
in 1864. *Photo by Mathew Brady,*
courtesy of the National Archives.



The family parlor and dining room at the time the mansion was being restored by the War Department. Originally there were doors and a fanlight in the center arch, those on the outside being filled in with lath and plaster, perhaps to make the room easier to heat. Mary Custis and Robert E. Lee stood under the center arch during their marriage ceremony in 1831.

23 feet high and a little over 5 feet thick at the base. Early writers differ as to whether the portico was derived from the smaller, well-proportioned Thesium at Athens, or the larger, more imposing Temple of Neptune at Paestum, Italy.[23] Actually, the portico of Arlington House seems to be a compromise between the two, being larger than the first named and smaller than the second.[24] Regardless of the prototype, there is no doubt as to the effectiveness of the architectural style chosen, for no other would have had the strength and massiveness necessary to make the building impressive from the distance at which it was normally viewed.[25] Yet for all its simplicity and solidity, the proportions of the mansion are so well balanced and refined as to make it one of the most appealing of its type.

Actually the building was conceived on too grand a scale for Custis to complete it before his death in 1857. The large drawing-room south of the main hall was not plastered until 1855, at which time marble mantels of Victorian design were installed by the Lees, together with a hot-air furnace in the basement. During this "renovation," two dressing rooms at the east end of the second floor hall were made into one small guest room and a doorway opened from it into the hall.[26] The partition walls in the north wing were never removed; and it was not until after the Civil War, when the house was serving as headquarters for the Arlington National Cemetery, that the west side of the house was covered with stucco cement to correspond with the rest of the exterior.

Though he was a man of considerable ability and one of the best-known personalities of his time, George Washington Parke Custis of course never approached the stature of George Washington or Robert E. Lee, between whom he was a living link. Yet he had his own merits and achievements. His home was one of the latter, a monument to his taste and perseverance. In building it, he gave to future generations not only an outstanding example of a Greek Revival building of the early 19th century, but one whose architectural character, dignity and strength combined with simplicity and beauty—make it most appropriate for the purpose to which it is now dedicated, a memorial to General Robert E. Lee.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Joseph Pearson Farley, *Three Rivers* (Neale Publishing Co., N. Y. & Wash., 1910), 126.

2. Rosalie S. Calvert to Jean Charles Stier, July 3, 1802, printed in William D. Hoyt, Jr., ed., "The Calvert-Stier Correspondence," *Md. Hist. Mag.*, XXXVIII (1943), 130-131.

3. Mrs. Robert E. Lee to Mrs. Laura C. Holloway, n.d., printed in the latter's, *The Ladies of the White House* (2 vols. Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1886), II, 59.

4. That Hadfield designed the wings as well as the portico is demonstrated by the windows in the former being almost identical to those in the old City Hall, now the District Court, in Washington, a building which is indisputably his. They also closely resemble those seen in the plans and elevations of a "Country House near Washington," dated 1798, and signed by George Hadfield. These plans, now in the library of the School of Architecture at Columbia University, are the only ones by Hadfield known to be still in existence in this country. Other evidence, too detailed to present here, confirms this belief.

5. In the *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, D. C.), Feb. 13, 1826.

6. For Elliot's attribution, see his letter to the editor, *ibid.*, June 17, 1833; for his having been a pupil of Hadfield's, see same to same, Feb. 20, 1835; and for the quotations, see same to same, *ibid.*, Apr. 25, 1840

7. Facing page 150.

8. *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States* (G. P. Scott & Co., New York, 1834), I, 336.

9. Gilbert L. Rodier, "Arlington House," *Architectural Forum*, XL (March, 1924), 89, 92. The woodwork in this wing is now being refinished, and the removal of the old paint has verified Mr. Rodier's observations. The findings of L. M. Leisenring, "An Account of the Restoration of Arlington House," *Federal Architect*, July, 1932, 8, are in substantial agreement with those of Mr. Rodier. Mr. Leisenring was the architect in charge when the Lee Mansion was restored by the War Department about 1930.

10. Until the restoration of the mansion, it was believed that the larger room had not been finished off until about 1857, but the finding of a strip of wallpaper of classic design under a more modern mantel, indicated that the room was finished at an early period, *op. cit.*

11. This fact, too, was disclosed during the restoration, for which see L. M. Leisenring, "The Restoration of Arlington House," *Quartermaster Review*, March, April, 1934, 20.

12. Cornelia Lee (?) to Mrs. Richard Bland Lee (?), April 13, 1804, photostat in Lee Family Papers, Library of Congress. She adds: "The room we were in was 24 feet Square & 18 high," most likely the present Dining-room in the south wing.

13. *Daily National Intelligencer*, May 7, 1811.

14. Notably the letter of Cornelia Lee cited above.

15. In Holloway, *The Ladies of the White House*, II, 59; Marietta M. Andrews, *George Washington's Country* (E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1930), 149.

16. See the advertisement for Randolph's cement, in *Daily National Intelligencer*, Aug. 19, 1818.

17. Letter to editor of the *N. Y. Republican Chronicle*, dated March 16, 1818, reprinted in the *Washington* (D. C.) *Gazette*, May 7, 1818.

18. Including a bill for $300 from Cornelius McLean, builder, to G. W. P. Custis, April 18, 1818, *Custis Papers*, Va. Hist. Soc.; and letter of G. W. P. Custis to Edward Stabler (?), in Eleanor Leadbeater, "The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop, Alexandria, Va., 1792-1933," American Pharmaceutical Association *Journal*, XXIII (Nov., 1934), 1139.

19. Auguste Levasseur, *Lafayette in America in 1824 and 1825* (2 vols. Carey & Lea, Philadelphia, 1829), II, 12, Trans. by John D. Godman.

20. For the tradition, see John Ball Osborne, *The Story of Arlington* (J. B. Osborne, Washington, D. C.) 14. Custis did own brickmolds, bought at public sale held at Mount Vernon in 1803, for which see Eugene E. Prussing, *The Estate of George Washington, Deceased* (Little, Brown, & Co., Boston, 1927), 457.

21. For the pediment being scored see Jonathan Elliot, *Historical Sketches of the Ten Miles Square* (J. Elliot, Jr., Washington, 1830), 291. Whether the columns had drum lines originally cannot be said, the old stucco having been stripped off and the columns replastered about 1890. It is likely, however, that the lines in the present coating were copied from the older ones.

22. For the details of the material used in the construction of the mansion and the construction itself, the author is indebted to Mr. L. M. Leisenring, who kindly made available to him a copy of his unpublished lecture, entitled "The Restoration of Arlington House," containing much specific information discovered at the time the house was restored. It should be mentioned that, according to tradition, all the wood used in the house was cut on the estate, from which came, too, the stone used in parts of the foundation. It is known that Custis did have a sawmill and quarry on a nearby tract, for he advertised them for sale in the *Georgetown* (D. C.) *Federal Republican*, Sept. 8, 1813; and Arlington was noted for the quality and variety of its standing timber.

23. Levasseur, 1829, says it was modeled after the Theseum; Jonathan Elliot, 1830, the Temple at Paestum, as does William M. Morrison, *Morrison's Stranger's Guide to the City of Washington* (Washington 1852), 120; while Benson J. Lossing, 1853, says the Theseum. All with the exception of Morrison have been cited above.

24. L. M. Leisenring gives their dimensions and compares their proportions in the unpublished manuscript previously cited.

25. Fiske Kimball, *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and the Early Republic* (Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1922), 180.

26. Robert E. Lee's interest in "renovating" the mansion is evident in the letter to Mrs. Lee, Aug. 20, 1855, printed in Edmund Jennings Lee, *Lee of Virginia* (E. J. Lee, Philadelphia, 1895), 433-435.

WORTH BAILEY is Research Associate for the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, which has long set a standard for the care and study of a historic shrine. This is an exposition of General Washington's venture into the Adamesque.

GENERAL WASHINGTON'S NEW ROOM

General Washington wrote to John Rawlins in 1785 with some optimism and confidence that his "New Room" might be completed with dispatch:

> I have a room 32 by 24 feet, and 16 feet pitch, which I want to finish in stucco; it is my intention to do it in a plain neat style; which, independently of its being the present taste, (as I am informed) is my choice. The Chimney is in the center of the longest side, for which I have a very elegant mantel piece; directly opposite thereto is a Venetian window, of equal breadth and pitch of the room, on each side of the chimney is a door, leading into other rooms, and on each of the short sides is a door and a window.
>
> I mention these things that you may be apprized of the sort of work; the time it may take you to execute it, and that you may inform me upon what terms; and also, if you are inclined to undertake it, that you may have leisure to think of a design.[1]

Reference was of course to his banquet hall, occupying the entire northern end of the Mansion. It had been projected in 1773, framed and covered in 1776, but the interior was still unfinished. Washington had returned home from the War on Christmas Eve in 1783 and early in 1784 launched the completion of this "New Room."

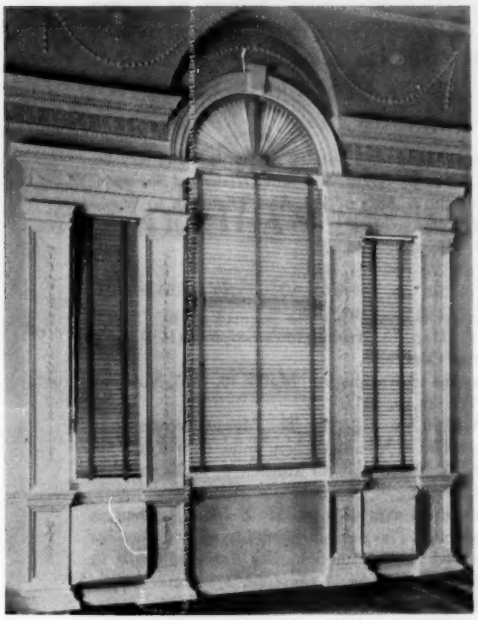
Considerable forethought, investigation and planning went into the project. Washington's decision to employ plaster and cast ornament was doubtless influenced by conversations with Samuel Vaughan. Vaughan, wealthy London merchant, had recently moved to Philadelphia and was himself engaged in building operations. It was Vaughan who lent Washington Bryan Higgin's newly-published work, *Experiments and Observations on Cements*,[2] from which the General extracted such parts as, he wrote, he meant to carry into practice. No doubt this cultivated gentleman described the richly-decorated interiors of the Brothers Adam, recommending the style as especially appropriate for formal rooms devoted to entertainment. In a gesture of friendship Vaughan sent to Mount Vernon in 1785 the handsome marble chimney-piece, which he had acquired fifteen years earlier and used in his library at "Wanstead House" in Essex.[3]

The above-quoted letter addressed to Rawlins in Baltimore was forwarded through the General's former military aide and factor, Tench Tilghman. That was late August of 1785 and the General's patience was wearing thin. He had been at least twice disappointed in finding a qualified undertaker.[4] However Rawlins reported to Mount Vernon for a conference in early September, promising designs and cost estimates. Following considerable dunning, he set for the job the sum of £168 current money of Maryland, plus travel expenses for himself and transportation for his workmen, tools and the stucco moulded at Baltimore. Board and lodging were to be furnished. Before the contract was drawn up John Rawlins had demanded an advance of £45 and Tilghman advised the General, "He is the only one of his profession; and therefore I imagine makes his own terms—tho' I cannot find he has been reckoned exorbitant."[5] Washington agreed to Rawlins' terms by pressure of circumstances, since he wanted the use of his room. In unequivocal language to the undertaker he declared that the estimate exceeded expectation.[6]

The contract signed by Rawlins on February 25, 1786 promised to begin work "upon a Certain Room at Mount Vernon . . . distinguished by the Name of New Room . . . before the fifteenth day of April next at furthest." On March 10th Rawlins settled upon a plan with the General's joiners. On April 18 one of the undertaker's own men began lathing the New Room. A day later Rawlins was again at Mount Vernon bringing an assistant, one Richard Thorpe, whom he intended to leave in charge of the work.[7] We learn from Washington's diaries, however, that such an arrangement did not meet with his full approval and after some argument Rawlins agreed to come back later to superintend the plastering. Thorpe was not unknown to Washington—having been mentioned as a possibility by Sir Edward Newenham when the General was

The Vaughan Chimney-piece, of statuary and colored marble undoubtedly of Italian origin. The gift arrived in February, 1785, and the General wrote in acknowledgment: " . . . by the number of cases in which it is packed, I greatly fear it is too elegant & costly for my room & Republican style of living." It was first used in connection with one of the firebacks cast by Charles Pettit of Philadelphia in 1787. Ten years later the English grate was acquired, also in Philadelphia. *Photo by Samuel Chamberlain. Courtesy of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.*

North end of Mansion, showing exterior of the window which gives the true Palladian touch to the Banquet Hall. It was inspired by a design of Batty Langley. The upper windows facing the west front are blind, the cove of the ceiling extending within a few feet of the attic floor. *Photo by Samuel Chamberlain. Courtesy of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.*



Interior of the Palladian window showing Rawlins' Adamesque ornament in plaster and composition. We have it from documentary evidence that the latter was "picked out" with small paint brushes; the colors not yet definitely determined. Washington recommended that the woodwork be "buff—of the lightest kind, inclining to white." Documentary evidence has been confirmed by recent archaeological investigations, that wallpaper was used—a green ground with classic borders outlining the openings, under the cornice and along the chair rail. *Courtesy of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.*

searching for a stucco worker the year before.[8] Apparently Newenham had reported that Thorpe was migrating to America and it appears he also warned Washington of his bibulous habits. In fairness to Mr. Thorpe, we should add that the General later credited him with sobriety and good deportment.[8] Compare the conduct of the house joiner, Richard Boulton, who voided his contract with Washington to continue with "his associates in drunkeness!"[9] Mr. Rawlins' workmen departed from Mount Vernon on August 19, 1786, but Rawlins was back with Thorpe six days later to measure the plasterwork done and to receive payment.[10] There were additional charges over and above the work on the New Room, for the General had arranged with Thorpe to repair or replace plaster elsewhere in the house. Rawlins' account as revealed by the General's *Ledger B* stood at £192.3.6.[11]

The contract signed by Rawlins contained no stipulation as to when the New Room was to be completed. The work dragged into 1787. In March came

the friezes for doors and windows, but there arose a dispute over the difference between Thorpe's original estimate and what Rawlins wrote was the lowest he could afford to do it for.[12] The General followed with a rejoinder: he did not desire to enter into a dispute respecting payment; he wanted Rawlins to view the work and be the judge. Thorpe was paid a higher price with the expectation of masterly work. The stucco was cracked and stained; he expected this to be corrected.[13] There was another delay for the walls to season, but in July of 1787 Rawlins sent Thorpe back to Mount Vernon accompanied by one Thomas Hammond to wash the stucco and obliterate the blemishes.[14] At this time they decorated the pilasters of the Venetian window and completed all the enriched mouldings in the New Room, fulfilling commitments. Under date of July 23, Washington's *Ledger B* sets forth further payment for the composition ornament amounting to £45 (Maryland currency).

John Rawlins' career in America as a practitioner of ornamental plaster and composition work was a brief one. He appears to have come from London in 1771 and first to have plied his craft in Annapolis, before settling in Baltimore about 1784. His death came suddenly a month or two after the Mount Vernon job was completed. The columns of the *Maryland Journal* for April 1, 1788 carried an announcement by his widow, Mary Rawlins, begging leave to inform her friends and the public that she was continuing the business of "her late Husband John Rawlins, and at the same place, on St. Paul's Lane, near Mr. Jesse Hollingsworth's, where any Orders directed to her will be thankfully received and duly attended to."[15]

For his cue in decorating Washington's New Room, Rawlins took the scenes of agriculture and husbandry from the Vaughan mantel, applying for unity of theme various farming motifs to the ceiling and doorheads. The good design and excellent modeling of the main cornice and ceiling are noteworthy. Elsewhere a full display of Adamesque details in composition is well disposed, unless one questions the over-fine enrichment of the trim. John Rawlins and Richard Thorpe collaborating at Mount Vernon as master designer and craftsman respectively, created one of the outstanding Adam rooms in America.

MOUNT VERNON LADIES' ASSOCIATION

1. John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*, U. S. George Washington Bicentennial Commission, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1931-1944, Vol. 28, p. 237.

2. *Writings*, Vol. 27, p. 298. This book was returned to Vaughan on January 14, 1784 by Col. David Humphreys. Washington later acquired a copy for his Mount Vernon Library.

3. *Writings*, Vol. 28, p. 63. The mantel arriving in mid-winter was not unpacked until the following spring under the directions of one, Vidler, identified by Washington as "an Undertaker from Annapolis." Fitzpatrick, ed., *George Washington's Diaries*, published for the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association by Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, 1925, Vol. II, p. 357. Correspondence elicited by George Washington Parke Custis, grandson of Mrs. Washington, in the 1830's from members of the Vaughan family who documented this chimney-piece as having been acquired by Samuel Vaughan in 1770, was published in the columns of the *Daily National Intelligencer*, Washington, D. C., for March 14, 1838. For these data, the writer is indebted to the researches of Mr. Murray H. Nelligan, National Park Service historian.

4. In a letter to Washington of February 20, 1784, William Hamilton of "Bush Hill" in Philadelphia and "Woodlands" on the Schuylkill, recommended "a person by the name of Turner, newly arrived from England." *Washington Papers*, Library of Congress, Vol. 229. This was Joseph Turner listed by the Philadelphia Directory of 1785 as a plasterer, residing at 485 Third St. General Washington had also enlisted the aid of Sir Edward Newenham of Dublin to find him a stucco worker abroad, *Writings*, Vol. 28, p. 324.

5. *Writings*, Washington to Tench Tilghman, September 14, 1785, Vol. 28, pp. 263-4, November 30, 1785, *Ibid*, pp. 330-2. To John Rawlins, November 30, 1785, *Ibid*, pp. 332-3. Tilghman to Washington, August 31, November 10, November 18, 1785, *Washington Papers*, Vol. 234. Articles of Agreement between Tench Tilghman on behalf of Washington and John Rawlins, February 25, 1786, *Washington Papers*, Vol. 235, p. 44. Also "Notes from Tench Tilghman's Sundry Accounts," January 26, February 11 and 24, respectively. *Maryland Historical Society*.

6. *Writings*, Vol. 28, p. 332; p. 369. Also Tilghman to Washington, *Papers*, Vol. 234, p. 129.

7. *Diaries*, Vol. III, pp. 27, 46, 47.

8. *Writings*, Vol. 28, pp. 324, 458.

9. *Writings*, Vol. 28, pp. 197-8.

10. *Diaries*, Vol. III, pp. 107, 108.

11. *Diaries*, Vol. III, p. 73. Washington's *Ledger B* (1772-1793) is in the Library of Congress.

12. *Papers*, Rawlins to Washington, March 10, 1787, Vol. 238.

13. *Writings*, Vol. 29, p. 201.

14. *Writings*, Vol. 29, pp. 242, 279. The Mount Vernon Store Book, original document at Mount Vernon, under date of July 20, presents the entry: "100-10d nails to Mathew to make scaffolds for washg. the new room."

15. General Washington in 1786 spoke of John Rawlins as "lately from England." The announcement by Mary Rawlins is quoted from Alfred Coxe Prime ed., *The Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia, Maryland, and South Carolina, 1786-1800* (Series Two), The Walpole Society, 1932, p. 318.

Mr. Charles E. Peterson has generously contributed the following excerpts from the inventory of John Rawlins, deceased, Sept. 10, 1787 filed in Orphan's Court Records, Baltimore, Md., *Inventories, No. P. 1787-1789:*

A Room over the Shop viz.

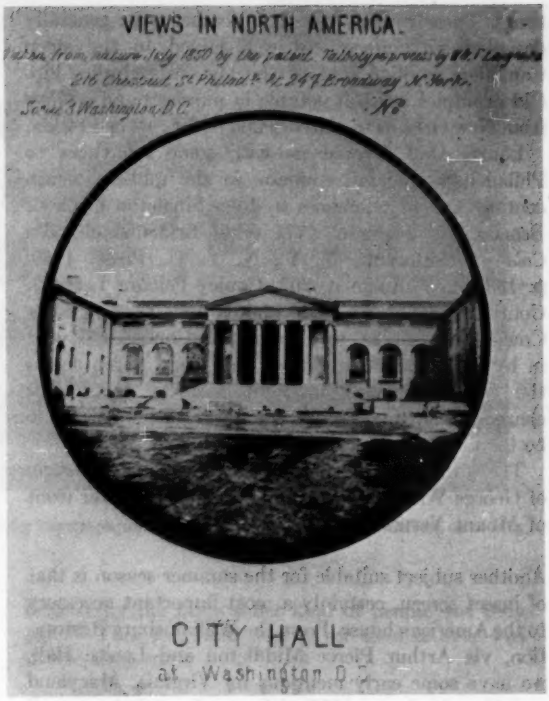
Sundry unfinished Composition work with moulds..... 3. 0.0

Shop Viz.

112 lb of lead moulds..... 2. 1.8
18 lots of Cast work for Cornish & stucco work..... 2.10.0
30 Rosam (?) moulds & frames & wooden moulds..... 0.10.0
12 plaster trawls 12/...
3 old laders 5/...

Cellar Viz...

15 tuns of plaster of paris more or less @ 18.....60. 0.0



AMERICAN NOTES

CHARLES E. PETERSON, *Editor*
Old Custom House, 420 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

A scrapbook of artist Edward Robyn, recently found in the attic of a Missouri farm house, contains a series of unique paper prints known as "talbotypes" of views made in Washington, Philadelphia and Niagara Falls in the summer of 1850. Charles van Ravenswaay of St. Louis made possible our scoop of the two views shown herewith.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Mrs. Joseph Carson of Bryn Mawr telephones that she has found a French Quaker, name of Thomas Jacques, who came to Philadelphia in the late 1600's, called himself an "architect" and designed buildings, including one Friends' meeting house . . . Singleton P. Moorehead of Williamsburg writes that he has discovered a good seventeenth century room in Tidewater Virginia. Location of this rare item, which Mr. Moorehead plans to record, has not yet been revealed.

THE AMERICAN PORCH

A few notes on the American Porch for this, our summer, number. We find that "Greenspring," mansion of Virginia Governor Berkeley near Jamestown Island, was called "the oldest inhabited house in North America" by Latrobe, who wrote "It is a brick building of great solidity, but no attempt at grandeur. The lower story was covered by an arcade which is pulled down. The porch has some clumsy ornamental brick work about it of the stile of James the 1st . . . " (*Latrobe Journal LX*, MS, Maryland Historical Society. Latrobe's perspective sketch of the building is preserved in the Ferdinand Latrobe Collection, Baltimore.) Brick porches seem to have been not uncommon in the seventeenth century on the James River and may still be seen in the Jones House, Fort Eustis, and "Malvern Hill," Henrico County. In the following century, reflecting current English taste, the porch very nearly disappeared. The few examples of the period remaining or shown in old views are often awkward additions.

However, the French on the Mississippi early brought in the all-around porch or *galerie* from the West Indies and in the eighteenth century it was found up the river as far as St. Louis. The *galerie* was so useful that it remained popular in the American period through the Greek Revival and actually up to recent

times. These Franco-American porches were generally designed with grace and well joined to the steep Canadian pavilion roof or the low West Indies hip. Old examples are still notable in numbers and quality from New Orleans to Natchez and as far east as Florida.

Louise Hall favored us with some references to Philadelphia *piazzas*, common in the mid-eighteenth century and to references to John Singleton Copley's Beacon Hill *peazer* of 1771 (Carl Bridenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsman*, N. Y., N. Y. U. Press, 1950, p. 158 and footnote p. 202, Copley-Pelham Letters). Contributions also include photographs of the Major Cowles house (1784) at Farmington, Connecticut, sent in by Mrs. Wilmarth Lewis. This has a porch across the front supported by light posts of quasi-Ionic character and was said by the late Frederick Kelly to be the oldest porch in that state.

The prime mystery in this department is the origin of George Washington's great porch on the river front of Mount Vernon.

• • •

Another subject suitable for the summer season is that of insect screen, certainly a most important accessory to the American house. From the Williamsburg Restoration, via Arthur Pierce Middleton and Louise Hall, we have some early mentions for Virginia, Maryland and New York: (c. 1732) "the gentlemen's houses all have fly wire to the windows," (1752) "skreens," "wiring of Windows," (1770) "fly lattice," "brass wire wove fit for pantries and daries to keep out flies," (1771) "to pieces of flywire 3 feet 1 inch square," and (1774) "WOVE WIRE for ROLLING SCREENS." These items were surprising to us for their early date.

DEPARTMENT OF CUPOLAS, LANTHORNS, TURRETS AND DOOMS

We haven't yet resolved the problem of what to call those architectural features that rode the colonial ridgeline. English writers Francis Price (1735), Batty Langley (1736), Richard Neve (1736) and William Solomon (1752) don't agree completely, and none defines all the terms used in eighteenth century America. Samuel Johnson, in his 1755 edition, gives the following definitions:

> Cupola—[Italian] A dome; the hemispherical summit of a building.
>
> Turret—[Turris, Lat.] A small eminence raised above the rest of the building; a little tower.

Louise Hall reports that the Boston Town House designed by Thomas Joy (contract August 1, 1657; completed 1658) had a " . . . walke upon the Top fourteen or 15 foot wide with two turrets, & turned Balasters and railes round about the walkes . . . " Henry Forman writes that the proposed Maryland State House at St. Mary's City (1664) was to have a *turret* and the word seems to have prevailed later at Philadelphia. The Williamsburg Restoration, however, reports that "cupola" was used there. Several readers have pointed out the description of the new dome of the State House at Annapolis in the *Columbian Magazine* for January, 1789. This well-known structure, which still stands, had a "turret" (17′ dia.), and above that a "campanile" (10′), the whole topped off with an "acorn" (3′-8″). As late as 1800 "turret" is used in the Boston carpenters' rule book where plain and fancy types are priced, including those with "diamond work," "Chinese dit." and balustrades. (*The Rules of Work, of the Carpenters, in the Town of Boston*, [Boston], 1800, 16.)

It is interesting to note the terms used together in the architectural competition for a design for the Philadelphia Library as announced in the *Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser:*

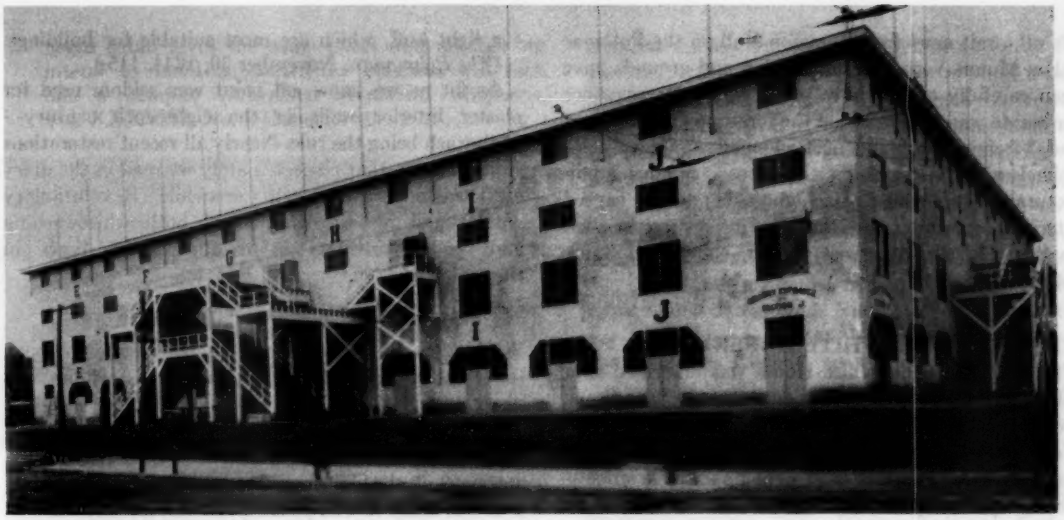
> Philadelphia, July 9, 1789.
>
> The DIRECTORS OF THE LIBRARY Company of Philadelphia, being solicitous to render the Building proposed to be erected, as elegant as the unavoidable frugality of the Plan will admit, request ingenious Artists, and Friends to the Institution, to favour them with Designs and Elevations for the purpose.
>
> The Building is to be 70 feet in length, 48 in depth, and two stories high. The present Funds will not admit of any kind of Turret or Cupola.
>
> The Directors will meet on the 20th instant, for the purpose of deciding on the Plan and Elevation. They acknowledge their Obligations for several ingenious Designs already sent in.
>
> A Share in the Library will be granted to the Person whose Plan and Elevation is adopted.

This is the competition won by Dr. William Thornton, who afterwards repeated his success with a design for the United States Capitol.

Norman Isham in his *Glossary of Colonial Architectural Terms*, (The Walpole Society, n.p., 1939) does not mention *turret*. The word seems simply to have been dropped from our vocabulary in recent years. All this lends force to the proposal by John McAndrew that a reliable architectural dictionary be compiled and published.

It seems that the *Cairo Messenger* of Grady County, Georgia is also laboring in this field, and we quote at length from their columns of October 25, 1950:

> The word CUPOLA, says the dictionary, comes from the Italian, French, and Latin CUPULA, meaning a little tub or small form, loosely, a small structure built on top of a roof or building for a lookout, to complete a design, etc.
>
> Now we know what we are talking about, and what we are not talking about, which is more than can be said for some editorials. We shall proceed with



This remarkable building, prophetic of things to come, was designed by the ex-partner of a famous mid-western architect over fifty years ago. Its identity will be revealed in our fall number.

our duty to defend and preserve the only bonafide cupola we have in Grady county for tradition's sake and the good appearance of our honorable courthouse.

Several citizens heard that the cupola was going to be torn down. Being greatly alarmed over this possibility, and immediately gathering their civic mantles about them, they marched in and implored us to make a public protest. The CLSC (Citizens League to Save the Cupola) is lead by Messrs. Clayton Baker and Ed Rushin, with an undisclosed number of other citizens who are equally aroused over any undue meddling with this landmark. Presumably they would lead the charge, if there is one, against those who would take the lid off the house of justice.

The facts seem to be that the old cupola had seen its best days, and had to be replaced. However, Ralph Brown, the contractor, has given his word that he would replace it with an appropriate structure, another cupola or a reasonable fac-simile thereof which would be just as pretty as the old one. With this assurance we are satisfied, and from here leave the problem up to the CLSC.

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL, 1790

The ten years during which Philadelphia was to be the seat of the Federal Government were not anticipated with joy by the Quaker element.

"The cities of N York and Philada are contending for the honour of accommodating the congress or senate," wrote Susanna Dillworth to her father in England July 3, 1790. " . . there is also something said of the Patowmack—but tis not agreed where they will fix themselves. I suppose wherever they go they will introduce dissipation & draw company which will make their approach rather dreaded than desired by the more sober kind of people—as they say N York is a vast deal gayer than it ever was before they came . . . "

• • •

The 1950 *Annual Report* of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association publishes (pp. 28, 29) a valuable letter addressed by George Washington to his cousin Lund at Mount Vernon in 1783. It discusses at great length the practical problems of wood shingles for roofing—a very obscure subject, you will know if you have ever tried to find out anything about it. Superintendent Wall advises that the reconstruction of the Mount Vernon conservatory of the same year is well under way—Walter M. Macomber, architect.

• • •

William Russell Birch, English enamel painter who came over in 1794, made himself famous by publishing his copperplate views of Philadelphia and of various American "country seats." Almost unknown, however, is his autobiographical sketch of which very few copies exist (restricted typescript, 1927, Free Library of Philadelphia). He seems to have fancied himself as a landscape designer and among the places he visited (like SAH in January) was "Woodlawn," the great house of the Lewises near Mount Vernon. At that time, he wrote, "the two wings which were two handsome elevations" were already built, but work on the main mass was at a standstill "from a defect in the plan of the architect [William Thornton]." Birch states that the construction at first appeared to be too close to the drop-off in front of the mansion but a remedy to the trouble was found so the work could proceed.

We all await news from Gunston Hall on the Potomac below Mount Vernon. The mansion and grounds have been carefully explored by the Colonial Dames since the estate was received from the former owner. Herbert and Virginia Claiborne of Richmond are deeply involved with the work on this house—famous architecturally for William Buckland's handsome carved interior woodwork, and the two interesting wooden porches on the otherwise rather countrified brick exterior.

WHITE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

When very new the White House was described as a "shining object" in dismal contrast with the scene around it (John Cotton Smith quoted in *Philp's Washington Described*, New York, 1861, 56). Because the walls were actually built of Aquia Creek stone—far from white—the question arises as to what finish the masonry walls had been given. (The standard story relates that the outside was first painted to cover the fire scars from burning by the British in 1814, but W. B. Bryan, *A History of the National Capital*, New York, 1914, I:313, showed that the exterior had already been whitened by the fall of the year 1798.)

We hit upon the answer while reading Honolulu newspapers during the late war:

> It is now the season,- There is nothing which so much improves the appearance of a house and the premises, as painting and whitewashing the tenements and fences. The following recipes for whitewashing have been found by experience to answer the same purpose on wood, brick, and stone, as oil-paint, and are much cheaper. The first is the recipe used for the President's house at Washington, improved by further experiments. The second is a simpler and cheaper one, which the writer has known to succeed in a variety of cases, lasting as long and looking as well as white oil-paint.
>
> RECIPE.—Take half a bushel of unslacked lime, and slack it with boiling hot water, covering it during the process. Strain it, and add a peck of salt dissolved in warm water, three pounds of ground rice boiled to a thin paste, put in boiling hot: half a pound of powdered Spanish whiting: and a pound of clear glue, dissolved in warm water. Mix, and let it stand several days. Then keep it in a kettle on a portable furnace, and put it on as hot as possible, with a painter's or white wash brush.
>
> Another.—Make whitewash in the usual way, except that the water used should have two double handfuls of salt dissolved in each pailful of the hot water used. Then stir in a double handful of fine sand, to make it thick, like cream. This is better to be put on hot. Coloring matter can be added to both, making a light stone color, a cream color, or a light buff, which are most suitable for buildings. (*The Polynesian*, November 30, 1844, 115.)

As far as we know, oil paint was seldom used for plaster interior walls in the eighteenth century—whitewash being the rule. Nearly all recent restorations seem to err in that respect. Lately we read in the diary of Christopher Marshall, erstwhile Revolutionary patriot and retired druggist, of both whitewashing and "yellow washing" in his Philadelphia house in the spring of 1790.

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Washington has never been an industrial city; perhaps the fate of its first manufacturing enterprise was discouraging.

Let us consider James Piercy's sugar refinery built in 1797 on the shore of the Anacostia River at the entrance of the Tiber canal. Eight stories high (46′ x 47′ in area) it was possibly the tallest structure in the infant republic, church steeples excepted. The owners went bankrupt shortly after completion and for a few years this remarkable building was used as a brewery. Finally it was torn down in 1847. (Allen C. Clark, *Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City*, Washington, 1901, 245, 246.)

We nominate Piercy's mill for honors on the roster of American skyscrapers.

• • •

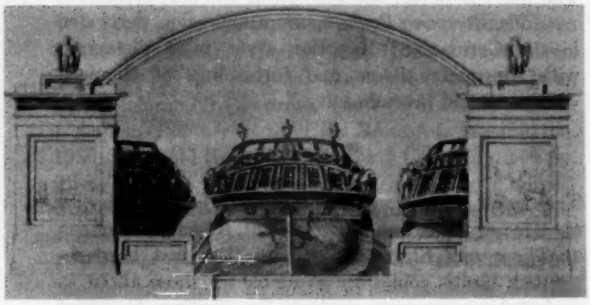
"Riversdale," the Stier-Calvert mansion near what is now Hyattsville, Maryland, on the fringe of Metropolitan Washington, has been taken over and refurbished for the use of the offices of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. An attractive 43-page illustrated booklet containing a historical sketch by Eugenia Calvert Holland was published in 1950.

The main block of the structure, a two-story stuccoed brick house, built about 1801-03, was said to have been modeled after a family house in Belgium called the "Chateau du Mick," but it looks pretty American to us. Originally there were some remarkable features including marble mantelpieces in the Egyptian style sent from Amsterdam and a famous collection of paintings including a Rubens.

The grounds were developed with picturesque features mentioned in a letter of 1808, but now disappeared:

> A lake just finished which looks like a large river before the house on the southern side gives a very beautiful effect, and furnished us at the same time with fish and ice for our ice-house . . . We have built a new one in the wood beyond the stables. It is covered with straw and surrounded with great fine trees and looks like a hut; a little farther on a

negro cabin gives the same effect and another we intend to build supported by columns will look like a temple. (*Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2 [June, 1943], 139.)



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

SOUTH ELEVATION OF NAVAL ARSENAL
Design by B. Henry Latrobe, Engineer, December 4, 1802

JEFFERSON'S MOTHBALLS

On November 2, 1802 President Jefferson wrote Latrobe, then in Philadelphia, that he would like to have a design for a great shed under which to store the whole American naval fleet between wars, suggesting a drydock with a roof span not less than 175 feet in the style of the Halle au Blé at Paris. (*National Archives. Office of Naval Records and Library, General Letter Book No. 6.*) In the short space of a month Latrobe prepared a set of drawings entitled "Plan of the principal Dry Dock or Naval Arsenal to contain Frigates in three tiers of four ships each." Our illustration shows the sterns of three demasted frigates snugly housed on the shores of the Anacostia River. The idea was that the ships would be economically preserved when not required for shooting purposes and presumably the salaries of officers and crews would be saved. It need hardly be mentioned that the scheme did not make Jefferson popular with the Navy. However, Latrobe, through this project, became grandfather of the Bureau of Yards and Docks and the Civil Engineer Corps.

PARKWAY ALONG THE OLD POTOMAC CANAL

The joint report of the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads on the proposed Potomac River Parkway has recently come off the press (Government Printing Office, 1950, 87 pp., illus., folding maps). A dozen years ago the Federal Government acquired the land and remains of the 185-mile canal between Georgetown, D. C. and Cumberland, Maryland, built 1828-1850. The locks in the lower 22 miles have been restored, as has the old stone tavern at Great Falls, the latter to be used as a headquarters and museum building. Recreation values have already been developed along this section, and in the summertime there are scheduled trips in a horse-drawn canal boat.

Recommended in the report was a controlled-access dual roadway with landscaped right-of-way on the Maryland bank at a total cost of some nineteen million dollars. Many more of the old locks and lock houses, one tavern and a number of fine masonry arch structures would be restored. Notable among the latter is the picturesque aqueduct that carried the canal over the Monocacy River (7 spans, 560′ total length).

Also published was a mimeographed essay "A Study of the History of the Potomac River Valley" (154 pp.) by Walter S. Sanderlein with much data on the construction and operation of the canal.

The project is interesting to compare with an English proposal "The Linear National Park," a development of the River Thames illustrated beautifully and described at length in *The Architectural Review*, Vol. CVIII, No. 643 (July, 1950).

WALTER'S IRON DOME

Firmly in our mind is the intention to some day write a piece called "The Million Dollar Dome" for some popular magazine. The story begins in 1855 when Mr. Stanton of Kentucky rose in the House of Representatives and offered an amendment for removing the old Bulfinch dome on the Capitol and substituting a new one according to an unusual design by Thomas U. Walter, architect of the Capitol extension. The optimistic idea was to spend about $100,000 and a few months' time for construction. The bill was passed. As soon as the old dome was off and a few materials delivered it was discovered that construction would cost about a million dollars (*Documentary History of the Capitol*, Washington, 1904, 638-641). There was a great row in Congress, but work carried on through the Civil War, when the construction became a popular symbol of faith in the Union. And time has healed the wounded sensibilities of the Treasury watchdogs; no longer is the million dollar dome regretted. (Note: Turpin C. Bannister described the evolution of the brilliant design of wrought and cast iron in JSAH, Vol. 7, Nos. 1-2, Jan.-June, 1948, 1-31—one of the most notable essays that has appeared in this periodical. We won't emphasize in these times the fact that the dome was largely modeled after one in Russia.)

CAST IRON FACADES

"The cast iron façade," wrote the editors of *The Architectural Review* over an article by Henry-Russell

Hitchcock, "is not an American innovation." (Vol. CIX, No. 650, February, 1951, 113.) This was a surprise to us—and also to Professor Hitchcock. Recommended reading for London is "American Notes" for December, 1950, pp. 24, 25.

"PRESERVATIONISM," 1868

We had always thought the word a modern one—clumsy but, after all, useful. With some astonishment we found it defined by General F. Meredith Read, Jr., in *Lippincott's Magazine* long ago.

> "By preservationism," wrote Read, "I mean that spirit of humanity which instructively defends governments, individuals, and old houses when threatened with destruction. It is folly to think that because we are citizens of a republic, it becomes our duty to demolish the monuments of the past, and to rush eagerly into the uncertainties of the future. It should be, on the contrary, a sacred privilege to preserve with filial care every vestige remaining to us which may illustrate the condition and modes of life of our ancesters." (Vol. I, 1868, 30.)

Read had just finished ten days of making measurements and notes on the Slate Roof House in Philadelphia—a seventeenth century H-plan brick house associated with William Penn. He was afraid it would be pulled down and it was. We will look up the notes among the General's papers.

Agnes Gilchrist has pointed out an even earlier example—William Strickland employed in 1818 to make a measured drawing of the house of Anthony Benezet (Philadelphia celebrity), afterward published by copperplate engraving.

Philadelphia has been in the business of preserving historic buildings for a long time. Just over two hundred years ago the Swedish traveler, Peter Kalm, reported an old house in the Southwark district being saved as an interesting relic of pioneer days!

• • •

The proposal to remodel the old State, War and Navy Building (built 1871-5, A. B. Mullett, Supervising Architect) just west of the White House has been something of a Holy Cause to architects who wanted to restyle it to a 1930 Renaissance.

In its day the building was much admired and it is interesting to read the description in de B. Randolph Keim, *Washington and Its Environs* (9th Ed., Washington, 1876, 127, 128). Just finished, it "consists of three harmonious buildings united by connecting wings, and together forming in design and execution, the finest edifice of the kind in the world . . . The *style* is the Roman Doric (Italian Renaissance) originally treated. It combines the massive proportions of ancient with the elegance of modern architecture. The *dimensions* . . . 471 ft. N. and S. and 253 ft. E. and W. . . . There is a *sub-basement* and *basement* of Maine granite, and *super structure* of Virginia granite . . . The entire structure has 150 rooms, and cost $5,000,000 . . . *The Reception Room*, a sumptuous *salon*, decorated in the Germanized Egyptian style, is in distemper with Marquetry floors and furnishings of ebonized wood and gold brocade . . . "

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The small mimeographed booklet *Specifications for the Measurement and Recording of Historic American Buildings and Structural Remains* has just been reprinted. Gratis copies are available for those about to undertake measuring projects by writing to Chief Architect Sutton, National Park Service, Washington, 25, D. C.

By preparing drawings and photographs in accordance with these specifications, records may be received into the Historic American Buildings Survey collection at the Library of Congress where they become available to students, writers and publishers at a minimum cost. The Survey was partly originated in a spirit of protest against the usual practice whereby measured records eventually become privately filed, lost or otherwise unavailable for a general use. Certain supplies such as bond paper, data books and professional advice are also available through the National Park Service and the District Officers of HABS.

HEATING AND LIGHTING

The United States National Museum has recently opened a revised series of exhibits of heating and lighting devices in its Arts and Industries Building. These exhibits, arranged by SAH member C. Malcolm Watkins, Associate Curator, Division of Ethnology, constitute a part of the Museum's notable collection of such devices and depict heating and lighting in various parts of the world.

The exhibition, permanently installed, consists of 24 displays, beginning with *Firemaking* and continuing through *The Hearth*, primitive heating apparatus, and on to *Stoves of the Inventive Period*. Lighting is treated in greater detail, with ancient and ethnological specimens to show primitive forms, and a variety of European and American lamps and candlesticks to illustrate advanced phases.

The architectural historian will find of benefit the dating and source attributions on typical lamp and candlestick forms. Hazy information on lighting has bred occasional anachronisms in installing lamps in restored old houses. By showing specifically dateable

examples, such as patent models, or other specimens of determinable age, the exhibition will be of service in correcting such misconceptions.

• • •

Two SAH members in Washington have recently been active in publishing their studies. H. Paul Caemmerer, Secretary of the National Commission of Fine Arts, has a volume off the press, *The Life of Pierre Charles L'Enfant, Planner of the City Beautiful*, Washington, 1950 (National Republic Publishing Company, 366 pp. illus., plus 104 pp. documents). Fritz Gutheim's lively paper delivered at the SAH meeting in Washington, January 28, was scooped by the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*. "Who Designed the Washington Monument?" may be found in the issue for March, 1951. Charles Scarlett's remarkable acquisition of original drawings and specifications for Whitehall, Annapolis, appeared in the March, 1951 issue of the *Maryland Historical Magazine* (Vol. XLVI, No. 1). We want it later for "American Notes."

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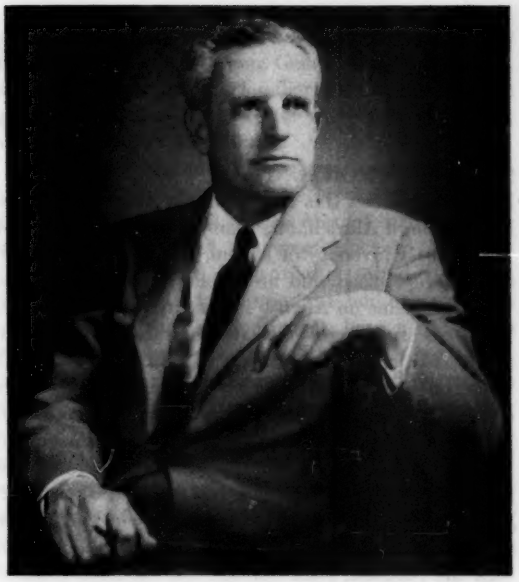
We recently heard two terms which seem pretty descriptive. In Richmond, Virginia, where residential Georgian still enjoys great prestige, we heard the efforts of one leading architectural firm referred to as "scared modern." On the other hand, we were talking recently to a lady at Newport who wants her new house to be "fierce modern."



HESSLER STUDIO

THOMAS T. WATERMAN

THOMAS T. WATERMAN (1900-1951)

With the passing of Tom Waterman on January 20 was lost one of the most knowledgeable architectural historians of our time. Passionately devoted as he was to the study of Early American buildings, his sustained search for facts and his flair in organizing them for publication added immeasurably to our library resources.

Your editor first knew Tom Waterman in the exciting days of 1930 when he was working with Perry, Shaw and Hepburn on plans for the major Williamsburg reconstructions, and, with John Barrows, preparing a book on Tidewater Virginia houses. If memory serves correctly, he had earlier assisted in measuring Palma Cathedral for Ralph Adams Cram and in recording the remains of Province House, Boston for the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. His natural gifts in this field more than made up for his lack of a formal professional education.

Late in 1933, when the National Park Service began in earnest its program of developing Eastern historical areas, Waterman was in England searching for precedent for our Colonial architecture. He was induced to return to this country and assist in the designs for various restorations undertaken. Later he occupied an important place in the administration of the Historic American Buildings Survey. His knowledge of early design and building construction was of great aid in working with local architects and historians in selecting buildings to be recorded and in the critical review of drawings, photographs and other data submitted for acceptance into the collection. These associations and the travel incident thereto are reflected in the wide geographical coverage and the use of little-known examples which characterize his last published work, *Dwellings of Colonial America* (Chapel Hill, 1950).

Waterman's writings appeared in numerous periodicals as well as in four book-length works. Floor plans were perhaps his greatest interest and their analysis his most unique contribution. Perhaps second was his tracing of the great English traditions in American building. Waterman was the principal designer for the restoration of several National Park Service and privately-owned buildings as well as for the installation of some of the important rooms in the Henry Francis Dupont Museum at Winterthur, Delaware.

At its January conference in Washington a few days after his death, the Society of Architectural Historians voted a tribute with the regret that Waterman could not have enjoyed many more years of writing in which to draw upon his vast store of learning for the enjoyment of his wide circle of readers and the benefit of his colleagues.

S. A. H. NEWS

SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES

Most of the news this time concerns summer projects. Prof. Richard Aldrich, chairman of the Department of Art at the University of Miami, announces his fourth field survey in art and archaeology through Mexico. The trip begins on August 1st and runs for six weeks. The goals are the city of Oaxaca and its region, Monte Alban, Mitla, and the towns of former and present times roundabout. The registration fee at the University of Miami for six hours credit is $90. The expense in Mexico will be approximately $300. The third annual Institute in the Preservation and Interpretation of Historic Sites and Buildings will be held June 29th-July 11th, at Washington and Williamsburg. The course is offered by American University in cooperation with the National Park Service, the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings and Colonial Williamsburg. Inquiries may be made to the Office of the Director, American University, School of Social Sciences and Public Affairs, 1901 F Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C. From the 21st of July to the 4th of August, Oxford is offering an opportunity to study and measure examples of historic university architecture and to live in college at Magdalen, in connection with the Festival of Britain. There will be tours to the Cotswolds and Blenheim Palace. For further information, address J. Brosgall, Sec., Southern Regional Conference for Further Education, Shire Hall, Reading, England.

MORE MEMBERS HONORED

Dr. Karl Lehmann, a director of the SAH, was recently made a Knight Commander of the Royal Greek Order of the Phoenix and an Honorary Citizen of the Community of Samothrace. Both of these honors were in recognition of the excavations made during the past summers on the island of Samothrace under the auspices of New York University.

Henry S. Churchill has been elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects for his work on town planning.

NEW YORK CHAPTER MEETING

On May 4th the members of the New York Chapter of SAH heard President Charles E. Peterson speak on "Architectural Landmarks in Old Philadelphia" at the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University. Following the talk there was a discussion of plans for next year's meeting, to be held in New York.

LETTER FROM MISS HALL ABOUT PRICE BOOKS &c

I am still adding to the annotated checklist of publications by craft-organizations (carpenters, housewrights, joiners, bricklayers, stone masons, and the like) which was mentioned by Professor Hitchcock in his invaluable *American Architectural Books* . . . (1946, p. iv).

Typical entries are: acts of incorporation, constitutions and by-laws, rules for measuring and valuing work, library catalogs, orations on special occasions.

Bound volumes, pamphlets, and broadsides are included—with locations—which have not yet found their way into the Union Catalog of the Library of Congress nor the American Imprints Inventory. Nevertheless ephemeral items known only to local historians doubtless await capture in towns distant from the Atlantic seaports.

Persons aware of any such obscure publication—or of related manuscript material—will confer a favor by writing on a penny postal the title, together with the library (public or personal) where it may be seen, and mailing to:

Miss Louise Hall
6636 College Station
Durham, North Carolina

CALL FOR PHOTOS OF NEGLECTED BUILDINGS

Miss Betty L. Walsh, Assistant to the Director, National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings, The Octagon House, Washington 6, D. C., requests knowledge of good photographs of ruined or abandoned structures. A national magazine is planning a feature story on America's historical and architectural ruins and the National Council has been asked for assistance in gathering material. The intention is to make it as representational of various regions as possible. Credit lines will be given and the prints can be returned if so desired.

THE HOUSE IN BROOKLINE

Edward Steese, A. I. A., of New York was startled to see in the "Study for a House in Brookline," shown in the December article by W. Knight Sturges, the house built for his great-grandfather, John D. Sturtevant, in 1885 and occupied by his grandmother until it was demolished about 1933. He thinks the remarks made about the sketch itself are in some degree justified, but he feels that the description of another dwelling as "appearing as if it had grown up like a mountain" is more applicable to the finished house. He has prepared a reconstruction of its plan and a perspective of the stair-hall which he considers the most satisfying of any room he has seen here or abroad. These, together with his description of the house and list of other works by W. G. Preston, may be referred to at the Avery Library, Columbia University.

AGAIN PHILADELPHIA'S FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The conjectural attribution for the design of this early example of neo-classicism to the painter and amateur architect, Col. John Trumbull, was set forth in the JSAH, IX, No. 3, Oct., 1950, pp. 20-22. The argument there presented has brought helpful hints from readers —but no positive answer. It might be well to incorporate these with the scanty facts, already sketched, with the hope of ultimately arriving at a definite conclusion.

The elegantly proportioned Classical-Georgian Presbyterian Church (illustrated by the 1799 William Birch engraving in the October number of the JOURNAL) with its pedimented façade of the Corinthian order, located on Market Street, recalls, as Henry-Russell Hitchcock is good enough to point out, St. Georges, Hanover Square, London, designed by John James and built in 1724, church and newly laid-out square (1718), by appellation, doubly honoring George First. Trumbull, long resident of London, familiar with its fashionable quarters, with his keen eye for architectural niceties, must have known this church.

The name of Samuel Blodget was tentatively suggested by Oliver Larkin, also of Smith College, as the possible designer of the *wooden* Market Street Church of 1794, pointing out its resemblance to his *stone* Girard Bank (the old Bank of the United States) of the same year, the first important building executed in marble in Philadelphia. Blodget, born in 1757, was Trumbull's junior by a year. Trumbull, the painter, was a self-trained amateur architect; Blodget, the merchant and real estate operator, can hardly be classed as a professional architect. Although the two men were, in many ways, alike and their architectural styles not dissimilar, it would appear to me that considerable weight should be attached to the 1796 statement in *Stephens's* two years or less after the completion of both buildings ascribing the wooden church to "Mr. Trumbul" and the marble bank to Blodget. Trumbull never built in stone. His, with the exception of the brick Congregational church at his home town, Lebanon, Connecticut, is all wood. But such arguments are inconclusive.

My attention was directed by Charles E. Peterson of Philadelphia to an engraving of the 1794 edifice which appeared in the Philadelphian publication, the *Port-Folio*. A search through the files of that magazine for the following year disclosed an unsigned article (1820, vol. IX, No. 2, p. 495-501) with an engraving by John Boyd (much employed by Philadelphia publishers from 1811 to 1827) of a projected house of worship, to take the place of the older, 1794 church situated on busy and noisy Market Street. This later church was built in the new residential district, on the corner of Seventh and Locust Streets by the architect, John Haviland (1792-1852). The Haviland Church, with its heavy Ionic façade, was finished in 1821 and is described in the *Port-Folio and New-York Monthly Magazine* for 1822 (vol. II, No. 4, pp. 339-341).

It is Mr. Peterson again to whom I am obliged for pointing out another engraving of the 1794 church. This one appeared in *The Ariel*, also of Philadelphia (vol. II, No. 19) for 1829 (January 10th). It is, however, the identical plate, used in the *Port-Folio* of seven years earlier. The same engraved caption, "The First Presbyterian Church in Phila.," is followed by "As it stood corner of Market & Bank Streets" and in the place of "Engd. for the Port-Folio" "Published for the Ariel" has been substituted. The accompanying, leading article, likewise unsigned, refers to the "remarkable movement of classical taste in designing . . . of . . .

the architects of Philadelphia," but gives no hint of the designer. How exasperatingly inconclusive these references of the 1820's are!

The late Joseph Jackson in his *Market Street, the Most Historic Highway in America*, Philadelphia, 1918, referred to the 1794 Market Street Church "with its row of Corinthian columns." In his *Early Philadelphia Architects and Engineers*, Philadelphia, 1923, he wrote that it was the "first . . . attempt . . . to transplant in Philadelphia the Greek form in its larger significance . . . (and that) . . . there does not appear to be any record of the name of the designer of this structure, but it is strongly suspected that it was the apprentice work of Samuel Blodget, whose greater and more successful effort was the façade of the First Bank of the United States, now the Girard National Bank . . . " (pp. 69-70). The same author in his *Development of American Architecture*, 1783-1830, Philadelphia, 1926, reproduced (on p. 11) the engraving of the Market Street Church from the *Port-Folio* of 1822, below which he wrote, "*Designed by an amateur, it was the first classic structure in Philadelphia.*" He stated (pp. 15-16):

> There does not appear to be any record of the designer of the First Presbyterian Church . . . more the pity because it was one of the first instances in this country where the classic temples of antiquity were drawn upon to furnish designs for Christian temples in this part of the world. It has been suggested that Dr. William Thornton, the architect of the Library of Philadelphia, was the author of the design . . . If Doctor Thornton was not the designer of the church edifice then the next most probable designer would have been Samuel Blodgett, who suggested the design of the first Bank of the United States, which building was started about the same time. There are similarities of design in both the facades, but the bank building was the better example of the Corinthian porch front. Also its columns were of marble, and fluted, while the others were of wood and plain.

There is mention of the 1794 Market Street Church with its "handsome portico, with Corinthian columns (which) distinguish the structure" in John F. Faris's *Old Churches and Meeting-Houses in and around Philadelphia*, Philadelphia, 1926, but no hint of authorship is given. So much for such past recordings which have come to light.

The First Presbyterian Church of 1794 is listed—with a large question—in my recent *Works of Colonel John Trumbull, Artist of the American Revolution*. As the volume is to be reprinted it would be well to have the tentative and questionable Trumbull attribution of this "*first classic structure in Philadelphia*" either deleted entirely, or securely settled in favor of the old Colonel, "patriot-artist" and amateur architect.

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